

REMARKS

Initially, applicants' attorney notes that the present Preliminary Amendment has been prepared in accordance with the revised amendment format published in the Official Gazette Notice on February 25, 2003. More particularly, the revised amendment format is prepared in accordance with proposed revisions to 37 CFR 1.121. In such circumstances, applicants' attorney respectfully requests waiver of the format requirements of current rule 37 CFR 1.121.


By the foregoing amendments, Claims 1-21 have been canceled, and Claims 22-61 have been added to the present application. In addition, the specification has been amended.

Applicants hereby claim the foreign priority benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119 of Swiss Patent Application No. 2286/98 filed November 13, 1998. A certified copy of this Swiss patent application was submitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office in connection with applicants' related U.S. Application No. 09/831,011. Applicants also claim the priority of International Application No. PCT/CH99/00528 filed November 10, 1999. A copy of this international application was submitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office in connection with applicants' related U.S. Application No. 09/831,011.

Authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 501402 for the examination fees relating to the submittal of this Preliminary Amendment and Claim For Priority is provided in the accompanying Transmittal Letter. If any additional fees, including extension or petition fees, are due in connection with the submission of this Preliminary Amendment and Claim For Priority, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge them to Deposit Account No. 501402.

Respectfully Submitted,

McCARTER & ENGLISH, LLP


By: John K. Kim
Reg. No. 37,002

McCarter & English, LLP
Four Gateway Center
100 Mulberry Street
Newark, NJ 07102
Telephone: (973) 848-5366